

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CCO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

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SY-04 USSS-00 OC-06 NIC-01 EB-11 SIL-01 LAB-06 OMB-01

COME-00 TRSE-00 SCCT-02 DRC-01 IO-14 ACDA-19 /154 W

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Z 081753Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 9974

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2850

PLEASE PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: RUMORS OF POLITICAL CRISIS IN MAKING

1. EMBOFF HAD CONVERSATION THIS AFTERNOON WITH JUNTA MEMBER AND CHIEF OF AIR FORCE STAFF, GENERAL MANUEL NETO. GEN. NETO TOLD EMBOFF THAT OVER WEEKEND PRESIDENT SPINOLA HAD MEETING WITH JUNTA AND MFA LEADERS IN ORDER TO DECIDE HOW TO GO ABOUT GETTING THE COUNTRY MOVING AGAIN. SPECIFIC REASON FOR MEETING WAS RESIGNATION TENDERED LAST WEDNESDAY BY PRIME MINISTER PALMA CARLOS, WHO ALLEGEDLY DESIROUS OF QUITTING GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF HIS INABILITY TO RULE PRESENT COALITION. PALMA CARLOS PARTICULARLY UPSET WITH MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO PEREIRA DE MOURA WHO TERMED A "GENERAL PROBLEM" IN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. HE AND OTHER LEFTISTS IN COUNCIL REPORTEDLY HAD BEEN BLOCKING PASSAGE OF NUMBER OF IMPORTANT BILLS, SUCH AS LABOR LAW.

2. ACCORDING TO GEN. NETO JUNTA AND MFA HAVE AGREED THAT POWERS OF PRIME MINISTER WILL BE INCREASED. PRIME MINISTER  
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WILL SIMPLY DECREE FUTURE LAWS RATHER THAN AGREE ON THEM

BY CONSENSUS IN CABINET. NETO SAID PEREIRA DE MOURA WILL BE DISMISSED AT COUNCIL OF STATE MEETING CONVOKED FOR THIS AFTERNOON. OTHER MINISTERS SUCH AS MINISTER OF HEALTH, MINISTER OF EDUCATION, MINISTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION AND MINISTER OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION WILL ALSO GO. NETO SAID MILITARY WOULD ASSUME THESE AND PERHAPS SOME OTHER POSITIONS BUT GAVE NO FURTHER DETAILS.

3. EMBASSY HAS HEARD FROM OTHER SOURCES A DIFFERENT VERSION OF WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THIS MOMENT IN UPPER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE LIBERAL EX-DEPUTY FROM AZORES JOAO BOSCO MOTA AMARAL, PRESIDENT SPINOLA IS CONVOKING COUNCIL OF STATE TODAY IN ORDER TO ATTEMPT TO PUSH THROUGH A COMPLETELY NEW CONSTITUTION, WHICH WOULD REPLACE THE EXISTING CONSTITUTION OF 1932 AND THE MAY 14 AMENDMENT TO IT INCORPORATING THE ARMED FORCES PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAM. NEW CONSTITUTION WOULD AMONG OTHER THINGS ALTER OR DO AWAY WITH THE ARMED FORCES PROGRAM (THIS PROGRAM OUTLINED IN LISBON 1950). SPINOLA ALLEGEDLY FEELS HE HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE JUNTA AND OF ENOUGH OF THE RANK AND FILE SOLDIERS TO FACE DOWN AND REMOVE THE MFA FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE.

4. SAME SOURCE ALSO SAYS SPINOLA INTENDS TO CALL FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION THIS FALL AND AT SAME TIME ASK FOR POPULAR APPROVAL OF NEW CONSTITUTION BY MEANS OF A REFERENDUM. (OTHER PERSONS HAVE ALSO TOLD US THAT SPINOLA THINKING SERIOUSLY OF CALLING QUICK ELECTION TO LEGITIMIZE HIS MANDATE.) SPINOLA ALLEGEDLY INTENDS TO DELAY HOLDING OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY CALLED FOR IN MFA PROGRAM UNTIL 1976, AT WHICH TIME A NEW PERMANENT CONSTITUTION WOULD BE PROMULGATED.

5. MOTA AMARAL CLAIMS THAT PRIME MINISTER PALMA CARLOS OFFERED TO RESIGN LAST WEDNESDAY BUT WAS GIVEN A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE BY SPINOLA. NO REASON GIVEN FOR PALMA CARLOS' DECISION TO RESIGN. MOTA AMARAL SAYS HE UNDERSTANDS PALMA CARLOS HAS BEEN ASKED TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE AMONG

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OTHERS, MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO PEREIRA DA MOURA, AND PERHAPS CUNHAL AND SOARES AS WELL.

6. ANOTHER SOURCE, DR. MANUEL FIGUEIRA, DIRECTOR OF MORNING NEWSPAPER O SEculo, CALLED ON EMBOFF AT HIS HOME AT 0700 THIS MORNING TO SAY THAT COUNTRY IS IN MIDST OF CRISIS WHICH COULD LEAD TO CIVIL WAR. SOURCE NOTED THAT CRUCIAL ISSUE WAS WHETHER SPINOLA OR MFA WOULD CONTROL THE GOVERNMENT.

SPINOLA ALLEGEDLY HAS BEEN TOLD BY MFA LEADERS THAT MFA WILL NOT PERMIT HIM TO DEPART FROM OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN BY MOVEMENT (AS HE PRESUMABLY INTENDS TO DO). MFA UPSET AT FACT SPINOLA HAS FORMED AN ELITE "SHOCK FORCE" OF PARATROOPERS AND COMMANDOS LOYAL TO HIM AND WHO WOULD PROTECT ESTABLISHED ORDER AT HIS COMMAND. MFA ALSO SUPPOSEDLY WANTS REMOVAL OF PRESENT MILITARY GOVERNOR OF LISBON AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY A MAN OF THEIR SYMPATHIES. FIGUEIRA SAID SPINOLA DETERMINED TO HALT ALLEGED LEFTWARD TREND IN ARMED FORCES, AND THAT DISPUTE BETWEEN HIM AND ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT HAS RESULTED IN MEETINGS BETWEEN THEM ALL WEEKEND. FIGUEIRA SAID SPINOLA WANTS TO HOLD SNAP ELECTIONS FOR PRESIDENT BUT THAT MFA OPPOSES THIS. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT PALMA CARLOS TENDERED HIS RESIGNATION LAST WEEK.

7. COMMENT: WHICH SCENARIO WILL ACTUALLY OCCUR IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ASSESS AT THIS MOMENT. EMBASSY WILL REPORT FURTHER DETAILS AND OUTCOME OF COUNCIL OF STATE MEETING ASAP.  
SCOTT

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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